

8. STEPS TO POWER

After the election in September 1930 Hitler, in a speech at Munich, said that the hardest part of their struggle was now behind them, for in the past the bitterness of their fight lay in the fact that no one listened to them, that no one took any notice of them. An alien race had seized the leadership of the people with the aim of destroying the powerful German State and the German people. "First it had killed the spirit; through this loss of spirit the German people had been reduced politically to serfdom; this political serfdom had been transformed into economic slavery which entailed the distress of millions of individual Germans. Out of this distress there had come the uprising, i.e. the people now begins to listen, and the spirit of opposition is the necessary consequence of the national collapse, and this is the necessary consequence of the system and the system itself the consequence of the wish to destroy Germany. This election means that the circle is now complete." And the question at this time is: what are the aims of this opposition and its leaders?

"It is a fight for an idea — a *Weltanschauung*: and in the forefront stands a fundamental principle: Men do not exist for the State, the State exists for men. First and far above all else stands the idea of the people: the State is a form of organization of this people, and the meaning and the purpose of the State are through this form of organization to assure the life (*Lebensexistenz*) of the people. And from this there arises a new mode of thought and thus necessarily a new political method."

"We say: a new mode of thought. Today our whole official political outlook is rooted in the view that the State must be maintained because the State in itself is the essential thing; we, on the other hand, maintain that the State in its form has a definite purpose to fulfill and the moment that it fails to fulfill its purpose the form stands condemned. Above everything stands the purpose to maintain the nation's life — that is the essential thing — and one should not speak of a law for the protection of the State but for the protection of the nation: it is of this protection that one must think.... In the place of this rigid formal organization — the State — must be set the living organism—the people. Then all action is given a new untrammelled freedom: all the formal fetters which can today be imposed on men become immoral directly they fail to maintain the people, because *that is* the highest purpose in life and the aim of all reasonable thought and action."

"If today our action employs among its different weapons that of Parliament, that is not to say that parliamentary parties exist only for parliamentary ends. For us Parliament is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end . . . we are not on principle a parliamentary party — that would be a contradiction of our whole outlook — we are a parliamentary party by compulsion, under constraint, and that compulsion is the Constitution. The Constitution compels us to use this means. It does not compel us to wish for a particular goal, it only prescribes a way, a method, and, I repeat, we follow this way legally, in accordance with the Constitution: by the way laid down through the Constitution we advance towards the purposes which we have set before us."

"Never can Constitutions determine for all time the content of a purpose, especially when this content is not identical with the vital rights (*Lebensrecht*) of a people. If today the Constitution admits for its protection laws which are headed, 'Law for the Protection of the Republic', then it is demonstrated that the most which our present Constitution can prescribe is nothing but the protection and the maintenance of a form, and that does not touch the maintenance of the nation, of a people This purpose is therefore free: this is the goal which we proclaim and to which we shall attain."

Other parties may try to steal our ideas, but the old parties cannot be inspired by the new ideas: they remain what they were. "Our fight is not at an end: on the contrary our conviction is that for all time it is only from the fighting spirit that there can come the force which shall master those weaknesses which today in every sphere cripple our people."

"The State has a meaning only when it organizes and assures men's fight for honor and the maintenance of their existence. This fight is only thinkable if the highest forces are mobilized. These forces always flow from three sources: the value, the organization, and the spirit of a people.... We wish to raise once more the value of our people: we want to free this fundamental value from the rank growths and misformations which have obscured it, to raise it high to a dominating position: we want to give to this fundamental value, the value of our blood, a logical form, a form dictated by the highest reason—that means the abolition of democracy and of the parliamentary system. We

wish that this value — this possession of the German people, to give it a name, this blood of the German people — should be raised to its highest potency through the way in which it is administered. This administration must be modeled on the law of logic, of reason, of human insight and experience; and this insight and experience lead us to the way of the authority of personality. When a people which has a great value peculiarly its own allows its destiny to be determined by the highest logic and reason, by the most capable forces which it can command, that is the condition of strength. And when, further, this people as a whole maintains that spirit which in its turn is the condition for the formation of strength — that is, when from the least to the greatest it is inspired by the spirit of resistance, the mind to fight—then from these three factors — value, organization, and spirit — that strength will come which a people needs to maintain itself in the world.")

"From blood, authority of personality, and a fighting spirit springs that value which alone entitles a people to look around with glad hope, and that alone is also the condition for the life which men then desire. And when that is realized, then that too is realized for which today the political parties strive: prosperity, happiness of the individual, family-life, etc. First will come honor and then freedom, and from both of these happiness, prosperity, life: in a word, that state of things will return, which we Germans perhaps dimly saw before the War, when individuals can once more live with joy in their hearts because life has a meaning and a purpose, because the close of life is then not in itself the end, since there will be an endless chain of generations to follow: man will know that what we create will not sink into Orcus but will pass to his children and to his children's children. And so this victory which we have just won is nothing else than the winning of a new weapon for our fight.... It is not for seats in Parliament that we fight, but we win seats in Parliament in order that one day we may be able to liberate the German people"....

"Do not write on your banners the word 'Victory': today that word shall be uttered for the last time. Strike through the word 'Victory' and write once more in its place the word which suits us better — the word 'Fight'."

With this may be compared Hitler's evidence given at the Leipzig trial in 1930. The President of the Court asked: "How do you propose to constitute the Third Reich?" Hitler replied: 'the Constitution prescribes only the ground on which the battle has to be fought, not its aim. We enter into the legally constituted bodies and we shall thus make our Party the decisive factor. We shall then, when we are in possession of constitutional rights, cast the State into the form of which we approve.'

In the Leipzig trial of September 1930 a great sensation was created by Hitler's statement made in the course of his evidence before the Court:

"I can assure you that when the National Socialist Movement is victorious in its fight then there will come a National Socialist Court of Justice and November 1918 will then find its retribution and heads will roll."

The comment of Hitler on the phrase used by him at the Leipzig trial, "Heads will roll", given to the correspondent of "The Times" in an interview at Munich on 2 October 1930 is interesting. Hitler said:

"When I and my comrades in arms were in the trenches during those terrible years from 1914 to 1918 we all realized that fifty yards away from us in the British trenches were honorable men. Yet it was our duty to fight, and even to kill, these men. If we could act thus towards men whom we recognized to be honorable, what must our attitude be towards those whom we know to be unprincipled (*charakterlos*), those who are responsible for the ruin of our Fatherland?"

"Perhaps it is more difficult for England than for any other nation to imagine herself in Germany's desperate position. Never has England been so completely humiliated and so hopelessly overpowered as Germany was in the autumn of 1918. England, which has not suffered invasion and subjection by a foreign Power for centuries; England, where no battle even of civil war has been fought since the days of Sedgemoor; England can have no conception of our terrible plight. Neither could we ourselves have imagined such a thing before the War, and yet it happened. But any act of justice we should find necessary would be taken in a strictly legal manner. Don't condemn us, therefore, if we should act as you yourselves would act in our place. I hope that England will never find herself in a position like that of Germany, but if she were in such a position and if, in her darkest hour, she was stabbed in the back, what would be the attitude of England when on her feet once more? What would be the attitude of English patriots towards those among their own nation who had sought to destroy their country?

When standing for the Presidency of the Reich against Hindenburg in 1932 Hitler said:

"In my will you will find one day that I ask that nothing may be put upon my tombstone save my name, Adolf Hitler. My title I create for myself with my name and my individuality: I ask titles from none: I receive no titles as a gift. Even Herr Hindenburg cannot give me a title. What can a title mean for me, what meaning can the words Chancellor of the Reich have for me? MY great rival, President von Hindenburg, is 85 years old and I am 43 and I feel in excellent health. I am convinced that nothing will happen to me, for I know the greatness of the task for which Providence has chosen me. Before I am 85 years old Herr von Hindenburg will long ago have ceased to be."

From Hitler's speeches delivered during the election campaign in Lippe-Detmold in January 1933 a few sentences may be quoted:

"If we struggle to win the German man, then in the last resort that is not because we need him as a voter at the polls but because we want to change him through our education, we want to fit him for the great task set him by destiny — the unification of the German people and the service of the nation."

"Whatever is of any value in the ideas of the men who are in power today they have taken over from us. And what does not come from us is beneath criticism Schleicher's Government will be a continuation of the Government of van Papen and it will end precisely where the Government of van Papen ended. I have refused to become a minister without portfolio not because I shun responsibility, but because that way does not lead to the goal."

"When people tell me that I ought after all to enter the Government in order to win for us power from behind the scenes, then I can only say that I have never learnt to play the game behind the flats and that I refuse to learn it."

"It is in the last resort immaterial what percentage of the people makes history: the essential thing is only that we should be the last people to make history in Germany."

"Of one thing we are quite certain: one should never reap before the corn is ripe. We can wait and keep our scythes sharpened. The gathering together once more of the German people can no longer come from above: it can only come from below, since amongst the upper classes the fossilization of prejudices has already gone too far."

"I have trained up a Movement in which from the beginning — from the least to the greatest — I have burned out democracy and set authority in its place. In this new community I am building up the spirit of the community of a people's life which is founded on a blood relationships Parliament is only the supreme expression of a faulty education which has spread through the entire nation. It is not economics which saves a people, but the people must control its economic life."

"Power comes at last in Germany only to him who has anchored this power most deeply in the people."

"Those who today govern us believe that laws can take the place of the inner strength of a nation. But it is not how the Government acts which is decisive, but how the people reacts."

In his speech at the Second Arbeitskongress (Workers' Congress) on 14 May 1934 Hitler said:

"One cannot blame the German working-man for his failure to find the way which would have led him to his people, to the community of the people, not to speak of the way to National Socialism, if we remember that on the other side millions of the so-called *bourgeoisie* (*Bürger*) similarly failed to see the way, when in their case one might have expected that their higher culture and greater intelligence (*Einsicht*) would have made it much easier for them to do so. No! the unreason was the same in all classes — amongst the workers, the *bourgeoisie*, and the business world (*Unternehmertum*). But in their hearts all these men had long before ceased to believe in the rightness of things as they were. For the most part neither *bourgeoisie* nor proletariat was ready to make sacrifices for their convictions, much less to die for them.... We should not have been able to overrun this world in a few months and destroy the trade unions if men had still had faith in the rightness of their own idea.... Events have but confirmed our view that the overwhelming majority of German workmen was no longer attached to Marxism."